

R/T/F D20-1

**Film Theory**

Fall 99

Chuck Kleinhans

TuTh 9-11, 325 Annie May Swift

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The course examines the major aesthetic and other theoretical issues developed in film theory and practice. Intended as an introduction for students studying film theory for the first time, it studies aesthetic and cultural issues as a background to film theory, surveys the major figures and issues in film theory, and makes connections to related media and cultural analysis. The first quarter of the course is an introduction and historical overview. The second quarter (which requires the first quarter as a pre-requisite) will be taught in 99-2000 and concentrates on contemporary discussions in greater depth.

The course is organized as a reading, lecture, and discussion experience. Readings should be done in advance and brought to class. The lectures will provide a broad background to the readings, discuss some particular points in the readings in detail, and provide the experience of seeing how one theorist, the teacher, uses theory. Discussion of particular readings and screenings of some films (and excerpts) will be part of most classes. In addition to two quizzes on reading, students will be assigned several short essays and a take home final. Attendance is taken into account in the final grade.

All students are required to have an e-mail address. Reading summaries and short essays will be distributed to the entire class by e-mail. In addition some readings will be on Electronic Reserve at the library.

Required texts. Available at Norris Center Store

Hill, J. and P. C. Gibson (1998). The Oxford Guide to Film Studies. New York, Oxford University Press.

Braudy, L. and M. Cohen, Eds. (1999). Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings. NY, Oxford UP.

**Jan 4**

course introduction

screening: DUCK AMUCK, d. Chuck Jones; THE NAKED KISS, d. Sam Fuller, 1964, opening sequence

**Jan 6**

intro to aesthetics

Raymond Williams, "Realism" (handout)

Richard Dyer, "Intro to Film Studies" (OxGuide)

**Jan 11**

Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (FT&C, 731-751)

**Jan 13**

Munsterberg, "The Means of the Photoplay" (FT&C, 401-408)

report one: Munsterberg  
 Kracauer, "Cult of Distraction," "The Mass Ornament" (handouts)  
 report two: Kracauer on Shopgirls

### **Jan 18**

Jean Epstein, "On Magnification,"  
 "The Senses I (b), "  
 "On Certain Characteristics of *Photogenie*"  
 Béla Balász, *The Close Up*, (FT&C)  
 Report three:  
 Béla Balász, *The Face of Man* (FT&C)

### **Jan 20**

Ian Christie, "Formalism and new-formalism" (in Dyer)  
 Documents from *Lef*  
*Vertov, Cine Eyes: A Revolution*  
*Shub, Factory of Facts*  
 Shlovsky, "Where is Dziga Vertov Striding"  
 Shlovsky,

### **Jan 25**

Eisenstein, "Beyond the Shot" (FT&C 15-25)  
 "A Dialectic Approach to Film Form," (FT&C 25-43)

### **Jan 27**

Brecht "The Radio as an Apparatus of Communication" handout  
 Arnheim "In Praise of Blindness" handout  
 Eisenstein, Pudovkin, Alexandrov, "Statement on Sound" (FT&C 360)

### **Feb 1**

Richter, *The Struggle for Film* (exerpts)  
 Eisenstein, "Dickens, Griffith and the Film Today" (FT&C)

### **Feb 3**

Bazin, "The Evolution of the Language of Film"  
 Bazin, "The Ontology of the Photographic Image"

### **Feb 8**

Bazin "An Aesthetic of Reality" handout  
 paper no. 1 due

### **Feb 10**

review of papers, intro Classic Hollywood cinema

### **Feb 15**

Crofts, *Authorship and Hollywood*  
 Butler, *The star system and Hollywood*  
 read--one additional essay from FT&C on authorship or star (any in section V pp 509-606) **Summary 2**

**Feb 17**

Ryall, Genre and Hollywood

Williams, on melocrama (handout)

read--one additional essay on genre from FT&C (section VI pp607-724) **Summary 2**

**Feb 22**

Metz, "Some Points in the Semiotics of the Cinema" FT&C

Metz, "Problems of Denotation in the Fiction Film" FT&C

**Feb 24**

screening: **Morocco. (exerpt)**

Cahiers du cinéma, **Morocco** analysis (handout)

Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" FT&C

**Mar 1**

Creed, Film and Psychoanalysis

Augst, "The Turn toward Psychoanalysis" [handout]

Heath, "Narrative Space" [handout]

**Mar 3**

screening: **Two Or Three Things I Know About Her**

or other Godard film

**Mar 8**

wrap up lecture

screening for final

**Mar 10**

screening for final

Heath, "Narrative Space" [res]

**Final**

--take home essay due [Mon March 16, noon]

**Short paper no. 1** 10% of final. A 500 word essay

**Short paper no. 2** 10% of final. A 500 word essay providing a critical context for an assigned reading, screening, issue, or figure discussed in the course. This will be assigned by the instructor, and presented orally in class as well as published in written form.

**Summary no. 1.** 20% of final. A 500 word summary plus a 1000 word interpretive essay from a provided bibliography on Eisenstein, Kracauer, or Bazin. The important part of the project is your own analysis and evaluation of the essay, based on your knowledge.

**Summary no. 2.** 20% of final. Another 500 word summary plus a 1200 word interpretive essay from a provided bibliography and filmography. You will summarize an article that depends on analysis of one film (such as the editors of *Cahiers du cinéma* on **Young Mr. Lincoln**) and view the film. The important part of the project is your own analysis and evaluation of the essay, based on your knowledge of the film.

**Quiz** 10% Short quiz based on readings to that date.

**Final take home essay.** 30 % of final grade. 1500-2500 word essay in response to a question handed out at the end of the course intended to synthesize your learning in the course. Due in Chuck's mailbox and e-mail

The following books have been requested for two hour reserve in the library:

Abel, R., Ed. (1988). French Film Theory and Criticism: 1907-1939. Princeton, Princeton UP. vol. 1

Abel, R., Ed. (1988). French Film Theory and Criticism: 1907-1939. Princeton, Princeton UP. vol. 2

Arnheim, R. (1968). Film as Art. Berkeley, U of CA.

Aumont, J. and M. M. Alain Bergala, and Marc Vernet, (1992). Aesthetics of Film. Austin, U of TX.

Balázs, B. (1970). Theory of the Film: Character and Growth of a New Art. NY, Dover.

Bazin, A. (1967). What Is Cinema? Berkeley, U of CA.

Bazin, A. (1971). What is Cinema? vol. II. Berkeley, U of CA.

Browne, N., Ed. (1990). Cahiers du Cinéma, 1969-1972: The Politics of Representation. Cambridge MA, Harvard UP.

Carson, D. and a. L. D. a. J. R. Welsch, Eds. (1994). Multiple Voices in Feminist Film Criticism. Minneapolis, U of Minnesota Press

Eagle, H., Ed. (1981). Russian Formalist Film Theory. Ann Arbor, Michigan Slavic Publications.

Hake, S. (1993). The Cinema's Third Machine: Writing on film in Germany, 1907-1933. Lincoln, U of NE.

Heath, S. (1981). Questions of Cinema. Bloomington, Indiana UP.

Kracauer, S. (1960). Theory of Film: The Redemption of Physical Reality. NY, Oxford UP.

Mast, G., Ed. (1982). The Movies in Our Midst. Chicago, U of Chicago.

Mast, G. and a. L. B. Marshall Cohen, Eds. (1992). Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings. NY, Oxford.

Metz, C. (1974). Film Language: A Semiotics of the Cinema. NY, Oxford.

Michelson, A., Ed. (1984). Kino-Eye: The Writings of Dziga Vertov. Berkeley, U of CA.

Münsterberg, H. (1970). The Film: A Psychological Study: The Silent Photoplay in 1916. NY, Dover.

Nichols, B., Ed. (1976). *Movies and Methods*. Berkeley, U of CA.

Nichols, B., Ed. (1985). *Movies and Methods II*. Berkeley, U of CA.

Richter, H. *The Struggle for Film*.

Rosen, P., Ed. (1986). *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology: A Film Theory Reader*. NY, Columbia UP.

Sarris, A. (1968). *The American Cinema: Directors and directions, 1929-1968*. NY, E. P. Dutton.

Sontag, S. (1966). *Against Interpretation and Other Essays*. NY, Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

Strauss, N., Ed. (1993). *Radiotext(e)*. NY, Semiotext(e).

Taylor, R. and I. Christie, Eds. (1988). *The Film Factory: Russian and Soviet Cinema in Documents, 1896-1939*. Cambridge MA, Harvard UP.

Wollen, P. (1972). *Signs and Meaning in the Cinema*. Bloomington, Indiana UP.

Wollen, P. (1982). *Readings and Writings: Semiotic Counter-Strategies*. London, Verso.